

20 April 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dick Lehman  
VIA : D/DCI/NIG  
SUBJECT : Bill Bundy's Letter -- And the Question  
of Consultants and Academics

1. Having known Bill for 25 years, including his years in ONE and later, his views don't surprise me. I think he romanticizes the past a shade too much, and he certainly focuses too narrowly on structure of the Agency as the chief variable and not enough on broad changes of social and historical climate. He also shows an under-appreciation of the extent to which cross-fertilization between the Agency and academia in fact now goes on, in quiet ways less formal than the old ONE Consultant meetings. Sitting near the center of the "old establishment" at the Council, Bill is probably not as tuned in to the younger academics (e.g., who cluster around Sam Huntington's Foreign Policy, and not Bill's publication). It is many of these younger academics whom the Agency is most in touch with these days.

2. Nonetheless, I think there are some valuable lessons in the story of the ONE Consultants. As one of the few still around who watched the ONE Consultant system work almost from its inception to its end, I put these down for what they are worth:

a. The Board and Office of National Estimates benefitted from the historical period in which they were formed -- i.e., 1950-1951 (Cold War uncertainties, effective national consensus on foreign policy, CIA as bastion of civilized objectivity when State was traumatized by McCarthy, fond and recent memories of OSS, etc.).

b. They also benefitted from the fact of newness -- something fresh was being created under high auspices which promised to give academics a serious input into intelligence for high policy at or near the highest level of the intelligence structure. Allan Dulles used frequently to sit in on the Consultants' sessions, knew or came to know most of them personally, and this gave the whole exercise a cachet of considerable importance.

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c. Conversely, of course, the consultants themselves gained insights and information from exposure to government officials and documents. As the years wore on, and ONE gained in expertise and sophistication, the balance of payments clearly came to favor the consultants, in terms of information and expertise. The consultants, however, continued to contribute significantly in terms of concepts, ideas, and suggestions for fresh approaches.

d. The system, in its early years, got off to a good start because of the auspicious personal factor -- the prestige and respect possessed by Bill Langer in the academic world was of great help to him in setting up both the early Board, its consultants and its senior staff. [redacted] as Deputy Chairman of the early Board, also enjoyed similar academic glamour. Sherman Kent continued this tradition. It is no criticism of any Agency officer to say that it is difficult to command this particular kind of aura, since it takes some years of establishing eminence in academia to gain it; there is no other way.

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e. Another advantage related to amenities, conditions of meeting, peer-group psychology and even a degree of academic snobbishness. The ONE Consultants' meetings were held thrice annually (later reduced to twice) in surroundings conducive to comfort and good talk (two or three day sessions, first at the [redacted] No expense was spared in providing food and drink. Telephones did not interrupt. Two experienced, sophisticated female staffers worked hard and long in advance on logistic arrangements and the like. People liked the meetings not only for the more solemn substantive reasons but also because they were fun, comfortable, got them away from their routines, and most especially enabled them to meet their peers from other universities and other disciplines.

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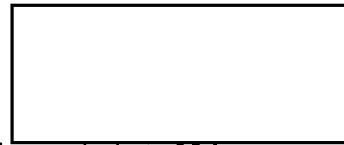
f. One prerequisite was to schedule these sessions months in advance -- a prerequisite for two reasons: consultants of this caliber are themselves scheduled up for months in advance and cannot be tapped on short notice (or will seldom admit that they can); and the Board and Staff were able to select carefully what problems and papers were suitable for discussion -- sometimes even preparing provocative little pieces designed to stimulate controversy over new hypotheses, etc.

g. For our present purposes, the main lesson from all this experience, in my judgment, is this: the use of individual consultants or small panels of specialists on particular problems or papers is of benefit for both PR and substantive reasons. It will improve

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the particular paper in question. But an even more important function is to collect larger bodies of broad gauged thinkers who, in the process of debate and exchange with each other, stimulate fresh thinking, new ideas, and challenges to the conventional wisdom. This is not being done enough in the Intelligence Community today -- partly because no body of first class thinkers has the time.



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